

10/019095

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**  
**REQUEST FOR FILING NATIONAL PHASE OF**  
**PCT APPLICATION UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371 AND 37 CFR 1.494 OR 1.495**

To: Hon. Commissioner of Patents  
 Washington, D.C. 20231

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES  
 DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)

Atty Dkt: P 0249550 /F1000236US00  
 M# /Client Ref.

From: Pillsbury Winthrop LLP, IP Group: Date: December 20, 2001

This is a **REQUEST** for **FILING** a PCT/USA National Phase Application based on:

- |   |                                |   |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. International Application            | 2. International Filing Date   | 3. Earliest Priority Date Claimed                                     |
| PCT/JP00/04303<br><u>↑ country code</u> | 29 June 2000<br>Day MONTH Year | 29 June 1999<br>Day MONTH Year<br>(use item 2 if no earlier priority) |
4. Measured from the earliest priority date in item 3, this PCT/USA National Phase Application Request is being filed within:

(a)  20 months from above item 3 date      (b)  30 months from above item 3 date,

(c) Therefore, the due date (unextendable) is December 29, 2001

5. Title of Invention **APPARATUS FOR TREATING GARBAGE**

6. Inventor(s) Atsushi Yamada; Haruhiko Suzuki; and Tatsuhiko Sekiguchi

Applicant herewith submits the following under 35 U.S.C. 371 to effect filing:

7.  Please immediately start national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371 (f)).
8.  A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) is transmitted herewith (file if in English but, if in foreign language, file only if not transmitted to PTO by the International Bureau) including:
- Request;
  - Abstract;
  - \_\_\_\_ pgs. Spec. and Claims;
  - \_\_\_\_ sheet(s) Drawing which are  informal  formal of size  A4  11"
9.  A copy of the International Application has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
10. A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
- is transmitted herewith including: (1)  Request; (2)  Abstract;  
 (3) 22 pgs. Spec. and Claims;  
 (4) 4 sheet(s) Drawing which are:  
 informal  formal of size  A4  11"
  - is not required, as the application was filed in English.
  - is not herewith, but will be filed when required by the forthcoming PTO Missing Requirements Notice per Rule 494(c) if box 4(a) is X'd or Rule 495(c) if box 4(b) is X'd.
  - Translation verification attached (not required now).
11.  **PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT:**
-

12.  Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)), i.e., before 18th month from first priority date above in item 3, are transmitted herewith (file only if in English) including:
13.  PCT Article 19 claim amendments (if any) have been transmitted by the International Bureau
14.  Translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)), i.e., of claim amendments made before 18th month, is attached (required by 20th month from the date in item 3 if box 4(a) above is X'd, or 30th month if box 4(b) is X'd, or else amendments will be considered canceled).
15. A declaration of the inventor (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4))  
 a.  is submitted herewith  Original  Facsimile/Copy  
 b.  is not herewith, but will be filed when required by the forthcoming PTO Missing Requirements Notice per Rule 494(c) if box 4(a) is X'd or Rule 495(c) if box 4(b) is X'd.
16. An International Search Report (ISR):  
 a. Was prepared by  European Patent Office  Japanese Patent Office  Other  
 b.  has been transmitted by the international Bureau to PTO.  
 c.  copy herewith (\_\_\_ pg(s).)  plus Annex of family members (\_\_\_ pg(s).)
17. International Preliminary Examination Report (IPER):  
 a.  has been transmitted (if this letter is filed after 28 months from date in item 3) in English by the International Bureau with Annexes (if any) in original language.  
 b.  copy herewith in English.  
 c. 1  IPER Annex(es) in original language ("Annexes" are amendments made to claims/spec/drawings during Examination) including attached amended:  
 c. 2  Specification/claim pages # \_\_\_ claims #  
 Dwg Sheets #  
 d.  Translation of Annex(es) to IPER (required by 30<sup>th</sup> month due date, or else annexed amendments will be considered canceled).
18. Information Disclosure Statement including:  
 a.  Attached Form PTO-1449 listing documents  
 b.  Attached copies of documents listed on Form PTO-1449  
 c.  A concise explanation of relevance of ISR references is given in the ISR.
19.  Assignment document and Cover Sheet for recording are attached. Please mail the recorded assignment document back to the person whose signature, name and address appear at the end of this letter.
20.  Copy of Power to IA agent.
21.  Drawings (complete only if 8d or 10a(4) not completed): \_\_\_ sheet(s) per set:  1 set informal;  Formal of size  A4  11"
22. Small Entity Status   is Not claimed  is claimed (pre-filing confirmation required)  
 22(a) \_\_\_ (No.) Small Entity Statement(s) enclosed (since 9/8/00 Small Entity Statements(s) not essential to make claim)
23. Priority is hereby claimed under 35 U.S.C. 119/365 based on the priority claim and the certified copy, both filed in the International Application during the international stage based on the filing in (country) Japan of:  

	Application No.	Filing Date	Application No.	Filing Date
(1)	11-184137	06/29/1999	(2)	11-277102
(3)			(4)	
(5)			(6)	
- a.  See Form PCT/IB/304 sent to US/DO with copy of priority documents. If copy has not been received, please proceed promptly to obtain same from the IB.  
 b.  Copy of Form PCT/IB/304 attached.
24. Attached:

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531 Rec'd PCTA 10 20 DEC 2001

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RE: USA National Filing of PCT/JP00/04303

25 Per Item 17.c2, cancel original pages # \_\_\_, claims # \_\_\_. Drawing Sheets #26. Calculation of the U.S. National Fee (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(1) and other fees is as follows:Based on amended claim(s) per above item(s)  12,  14,  17,  25,  25.5 (hiite)

Total Effective Claims	13	minus 20 =	0	$\times \$18/\$9$	= \$0	966/967
Independent Claims	1	minus 3 =	0	$\times \$84/\$42$	= \$0	964/965
If any proper (ignore improper) Multiple Dependent claim is present,				add \$280/\$140	+ 0	968/969

## BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(4)): → → BASIC FEE REQUIRED, NOW → → →

A. If country code letters in item 1 are not "US", "BR", "BB", "TT", "MX", "IL", "NZ", "IN", or "ZA"

## See item 16 re:

- |  |                  |         |
|--|------------------|---------|
| 1. Search Report was <u>not prepared</u> by EPO or JPO - - - - - | add \$1,040/\$52 | 960/961 |
|  | 0                |         |
| 2. Search Report was prepared by EPO or JPO - - - - -            | add \$890/\$445  | 970/971 |
|  | + 890            |         |

SKIP B, C, D AND E UNLESS country code letters in item 1 are "US", "BR", "BB", "TT", "MX", "IL", "NZ", "IN", "ZA", "LC" or "PH"

- |  |                  |     |         |
|--|------------------|-----|---------|
| → <input type="checkbox"/> B. If USPTO did not issue <u>both</u> International Search Report (ISR) and (if box 4(b) above is X'd) the International Examination Report (IPER), - - - - -                                   | add \$1,040/\$52 | + 0 | 960/961 |
| → <input type="checkbox"/> C. If USPTO issued ISR but not IPER (or box 4(a) above is X'd), - - - - -   | add \$740/\$370  | + 0 | 958/959 |
| → <input type="checkbox"/> D. If USPTO issued IPER but IPER Sec. V boxes <u>not all</u> 3 YES, - - - - -   | add \$710/\$355  | + 0 | 956/957 |
| → <input type="checkbox"/> E. If international preliminary examination fee was paid to USPTO and Rules 492(a)(4) and 496(b) satisfied (IPER Sec. V <u>all</u> 3 boxes <u>must</u> be YES for <u>all</u> claims), - - - - - | add \$100/\$50   | + 0 | 962/963 |

- |  |            |       |
|--|------------|-------|
| 27.  | SUBTOTAL = | \$890 |
| 28. If Assignment box 19 above is X'd, add Assignment Recording fee of ----\$40  | +40        | (581) |
| 29. If box 15a is x'd, determine whether inventorship on Declaration is different than in international stage. If yes, add (per Rule 497(d)) ----\$130 | +0         | (098) |
| 30. Attached is a check to cover the - - - - -   | TOTAL FEES | \$930 |

Our Deposit Account No. 03-3975

Our Order No. 081448

0249550

C#

M#

**CHARGE STATEMENT** The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee specifically authorized hereafter, or any missing or insufficient fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith or concerning any paper filed hereafter, and which may be required under Rules 16-18 and 492 (missing or insufficient fee only) now or hereafter relative to this application and the resulting Official document under Rule 20, or credit any overpayment, to our Account/Order Nos. shown above for which purpose a duplicate copy of this sheet is attached.

This CHARGE STATEMENT does not authorize charge of the Issue fee until/unless an issue fee transmittal form is filed

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NOTE: File in duplicate with 2 postcard receipts (PAT-103) & attachments.

In re PATENT APPLICATION OF

Inventor(s): YAMADA, et al.

Filed: Herewith

Title: APPARATUS FOR TREATING GARBAGE

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531 Rec'd PCT/US

20 DEC 2001

December 20, 2001

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Hon. Commissioner of Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Please amend this application as follows:

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

At the top of the first page, just under the title, insert

- This application is the National Phase of International Application  
PCT/JP00/04303 filed 29 June 2000 which designated the U.S.  
and that International Application  
 was       was not published under PCT Article 21(2) in English.—

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 5, lines 1 and 2, delete "or 4".

Claim 6, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 3 to 5", insert therefor -claim 3--.

Claim 7, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 3 to 5", insert therefor -claim 3--.

Claim 8, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 6 to 7", insert therefor -claim 6--.

Claim 9, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 2 to 8", insert therefor -claim 2--.

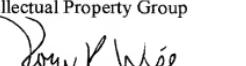
Claim 10, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 3 to 9", insert therefor -claim 3--.

Claim 12, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 3 to 8", insert therefor -claim 3--.

Claim 13, lines 1 and 2, delete "any of claims 1 to 12, insert therefor --claim 1--.

Respectfully submitted,  
PILLSBURY WINTHROP LLP  
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APPARATUS FOR TREATING GARBAGE

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

## 5 Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a waste treatment apparatus comprising a solid-liquid separating device for separating a mixture composed of a solid substance and a liquid substance, the solid-liquid separating device subjecting the mixture to filtering to discharge organic waste water while decomposing organic solid substances by the action of microorganisms existing in the organic solid substance.

## Description of Related Art

Methods of treating organic waste water using aerobic microorganisms have been actively studied and developed. For example, an activated sludge method is usually used in sewage treatment plants, and a submerged infiltration bed is used along with the activated sludge method in combined waste water purifying tanks.

In addition, methods in which domestic kitchen garbage or the like is fragmented or liquefied by a disposal unit so that it can be treated as waste water containing garbage have been also developed.

25 For example, Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. Hei 9-1117 discloses an apparatus in which waste water containing garbage is introduced into a solid substance

treating section which decomposes a solid substance by means of microorganisms and discharges primary treated water, which is then introduced into a waste water treating tank for aeration. In this manner, solid substances are decomposed and removed from the waste water containing garbage from the garbage disposal, and the waste water is purified.

In the apparatus disclosed in the above publication, waste water is subjected to aeration by an air diffuser in the waste water treating tank, which is a treatment basically similar to the activated sludge method.

The present inventors, on the other hand, found that more effective purification of waste water can be performed when a waste water treating device (a secondary treating device) comprising a packed layer which is packed with microorganism carriers is provided downstream of the solid substance treating device (a primary treating device). (See Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. Hei 11-19674)

In a known waste water treating apparatus, air is circulated using a gas supply member, such that the optimal oxygen concentration for the aerobic treatment is maintained in the microorganism carriers. However, in order to circulate air, in addition to the gas supply member, an air pump and a support layer or the like into which air is forced by the gas supply member must be provided, and this disadvantageously increases the apparatus in size.

Further, inclusion of an air pump increases cost and problems of noise and vibration are caused by the operation of

the air pump.

In addition, because a foam glass is used as a support layer, composting and recycling is difficult, which is not preferable from environmental standpoint.

5

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention was conceived in view of the aforementioned problems of the related art and aims to provide an apparatus for treating garbage, or a waste treatment apparatus, capable of effectively treating organic waste water such as the output of a garbage disposal or other kitchen waste water, by means of an aerobic treatment using natural diffusion of oxygen.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a waste treatment apparatus comprises a disposal for mechanically reducing waste discharged from a kitchen; a flow rate controlling tank for temporarily storing a mixture of the waste reduced by said disposal and kitchen waste water; a solid-liquid separating device for separating the mixture supplied from the flow rate controlling tank into a solid component and a liquid component; a composting device for converting the solid component separated by the solid-liquid separating device into a compost; a precipitation-separation tank for precipitating fine particles in the liquid component supplied from the solid-liquid separating device; a split-flow device for distributing the liquid component supplied from the precipitation-separation tank; and a waste water treating

device for biologically treating the liquid part supplied from the split-flow device to thereby produce treated water.

Said waste water treating device may comprise a tank containing microorganism carriers, and said liquid component 5 may be introduced into the tank wherein it is subjected to a biological treatment, and from which it is then discharged out of said garbage treating apparatus.

Said waste water treating device may have perforated containers which contain said microorganism carriers.

10 Said waste water treating device may comprises a plurality of said perforated containers.

Said perforated containers may be in contact with one another.

15 Said microorganism carriers may have different average grain sizes and be alternately stacked in said containers.

Said microorganism carriers may have different average grain sizes and be concentrically packed in said containers.

In said waste water treating apparatus, the ratio of diameter of said microorganism carriers having different 20 average grain size may preferably be 1 : 1.5 ~ 2.5.

Said microorganism carriers may be wood chips.

Said containers may be mesh baskets.

The mesh size (air gap) of said mesh baskets may preferably be 3 mm ~ 7 mm.

25 Said containers may be unglazed containers.

Said split-flow device may include a cleaning device, and waste water from the cleaning device may be returned to the

flow rate controlling tank or the precipitation-separation tank.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 These and other objects of the invention will be explained in the description below, in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

100  
10 FIG. 1 is a front perspective view showing the structure of an apparatus comprising an organic waste water treatment device in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, for treating waste water containing a solid substance;

15 FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view of a solid-liquid separating device 400;

FIG. 3(a), (b) and (c) are diagrams showing the operation of the solid-liquid separating device 400; and

20 FIG. 4 (a) and (b) are schematic views showing the decomposing ability and air amount (gap amount) in each layer (each mesh basket container) in a secondary treating device 500 comprising plural levels of cylindrical mesh basket containers according to (a) the present invention and (b) a related art.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

25 A first embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1 shows the structure of a waste treatment system

according to the present embodiment, the system being connected to a kitchen counter.

Referring to Fig. 1, the waste treatment system comprises a disposal 200 for finely grinding, mulching, or similarly reducing into a fine composition waste discharged from a sink 100 of the kitchen counter 100; a flow rate controlling tank 300 into which flows a mixture from the disposal of a solid substance such as ground garbage or the like and a liquid substance such as kitchen waste water or the like ; a solid-liquid separating device 400 for separating the mixture into a solid substance and a liquid substance; a precipitation-separation tank 700 for precipitating fine particles in the liquid component; a split-flow device 800 for distributing a supernatant (which will be described later) pumped from the precipitation-separation tank 700; a secondary treating device 500 for performing a purification treatment of the liquid substance; and a solid substance treating device (composting device) 600 for composting the solid substance.

The disposal 200, which includes an electromagnetic valve 202 and a start switch 203, is disposed under the sink 101 while the solid-liquid separating device 400, the precipitation tank 700, the split-flow device 800, the secondary treating device 500 and the solid substance treating device 600 are housed in a body case (not shown) and is located outside the house. The mixture discharged from the disposal 200 is temporarily introduced into the flow rate controlling tank 300 through an introduction pipe 201.

When only water, which is harmless to the environment when discharged into sewerage, is to be directly discharged through the discharge pipe 204, the start switch is turned OFF to inhibit start of the disposal 200. The electromagnetic valve 202 then causes the disposal 200 and the discharge pipe 204 to communicate each other, so that water from the sink 101 is discharged into sewerage.

On the other hand, when garbage or waste is to be discharged along with water from the sink 101, it is not desirable to discharge such water containing waste untreated, and therefore the start switch 203 is turned ON to start the disposal 200. The electromagnetic valve 202 then causes the disposal 200 and the introduction pipe 201 to communicate with each other, so that composting and purification, as will be described later, is performed.

The flow rate controlling tank 300 comprises a storage tank 301 for storing the mixture introduced through the introduction pipe 201, a solid substance transporting air lift pump 304 for transporting the mixture mainly composed of solid substances existing at the base portion of the storage tank 301 to the solid-liquid separating device 400 through the pipe 303, and a water level sensor 306 for detecting the water level of the mixture stored the storage tank 301. The air lift pump 304 comprises a blower 302 for blowing air for lifting and the air lift pipe 303 into the bottom of which air is supplied from the blower 302, so that the air lift pump 304 transfers the solid substances at the lower part of the air

lift pipe 303 upward, together with the liquid, to the upper end portion, from which the liquid and solid are supplied to the solid-liquid separating device 400. At this point, when the water level of the storage tank 301 is high, the water  
5 pressure at the bottom of the storage tank 301 is high, so that a large amount of solid substances and liquid are supplied to the solid-liquid separating device 400 by a driving force from the air lift pump 304. On the other hand, when the water level of the storage tank 301 is low, the water  
10 pressure at the bottom of the storage tank 301 is reduced so that a small amount of the solid substances and liquid are supplied to the solid-liquid separating device 400 by driving the air lift pump 304. Therefore, the driving period of the air lift pump 304 or the amount of air supplied to the air  
15 lift pump 304 is controlled in order to supply a substantially constant amount of solid substances and liquid to the solid-liquid separating device 400 regardless of the water level of the storage tank 301.

As shown in Fig. 2, the solid-liquid separating device  
20 400 comprises a first slit portion 410A having a great number of drain slots 411 formed therein, a transport portion 420A for transporting the mixture having been subjected to solid-liquid separation, a second slit portion 430A which is connected to an end of the transport portion such that it can  
25 swing between the drain slots for accelerating solid-liquid separation of the introduced mixture, and a position detection portion 440 for detecting the position of the transport

portion 420A. The first slit portion 410A, the transport portion 420A, and the second slit portion 430A are integrally resin molded by plastic or the like.

The first slit portion 410A has arc-shaped drain teeth

5 412 for screening and draining the mixture of solid and liquid introduced through the introduction pipe 201, and an introduction plate 413 for guiding the solid substances to the solid substance treating device 600 by causing the mixture having been subjected to draining (namely, solid substances in  
10 this case) to slide along the upper surface. Each of the drain slots 411 is formed between the drain teeth 412.

The transport portion 420A is fixed to a rotation shaft 423 coupled to a motor (not shown), and is composed of a transport plate 421 for transporting solid substances and ribs 422 provided on the rear surface of the transport plate 421. The ribs 422 are provided so as to provide the transport plate 421, which is formed of a thin plastic material, with sufficient strength to resist deformation.

The mixture is transported through the air lift pump 304  
20 to the portion of the transport portion 420A shown on the left side of the drawing, where liquid drips down through the drain slots 411 while the solid substances are accumulated on the drain teeth 412. The second slit portion 430A connected to end portion of the transport portion 420A is disposed within  
25 the drain slots 411, and swings within the drain slots 411 in accordance with the swinging movement of the transport portion 420A. In other words, by rotating the transport portion 420A

back and forth within a predetermined angular range, the second slit portion 430A is also made to rotate, to thereby stir the solid substances on the drain teeth 412 for promoting the draining process. By rotating the transport portion 420A 5 clockwise with appropriate frequency, the solid substances on the drain teeth 412 are temporarily pushed upward by the transport plate 421 and then drop down onto the introduction plate 413, which then transports the solid substances to the solid substance treating device 600. This operation state of 10 the solid-liquid separating device 400 is shown in Fig. 3.

Referring back to Fig. 1, numeral 700 denotes the precipitation-separation tank 700 which precipitates fine particulate from the liquid component supplied from the solid-liquid separating device 400, and numeral 500 denotes the secondary treating device functioning as an organic waste water treating device for treating organic waste water 15 (primary treated water) which is discharged from the solid-liquid separating device 400. A supernatant obtained by precipitation separation in the precipitation-separation tank 20 700 is supplied to the secondary treating device 500. On the other hand, precipitants accumulated at the bottom of the precipitation-separation tank 700 are appropriately returned to the flow rate controlling tank 300.

The split-flow device 800 distributes the supernatant 25 supplied from the precipitation-separation tank 700 into the secondary treating device 500. In this example, the supplied liquid is evenly divided into split flows by means of an

overflow weir having a plurality of triangular cut portions formed therein.

The secondary treating device 500 has at least two perforated cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a, 510b having a diameter of 15 cm, the mesh basket containers vertically arranged in contact with each other. In Fig. 1, four containers 510a and three containers 510b are alternatively stacked, the total heights of a container 510a and a container 510b being approximately 15 cm, and the stacks are arranged in three parallel rows.

The purpose for vertically arranging the cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a, 510b in upper and lower levels in contact with each other is as follows. When the garbage treatment apparatus is used for an extensive time, the container 510a at the upper level will eventually become clogged with solid substances, thereby preventing water from flowing through the container. To deal with this problem, maintenance of the containers is necessary. In this maintenance, the container 510a at the upper level is replaced by the container 510b at the lower level, and a new microorganism carrier is supplied at the lower level. The vertical two-level arrangement according to the present embodiment facilitates such maintenance. In the example of Fig. 1, when replacing the containers, a new container 510b is added at the lowermost level while the container 510a at the uppermost level is removed.

It should be noted that any number (2 or more) of levels

of the cylindrical containers 510a, 510b may be provided for similarly achieving the effects of the present invention.

The ratio of the average grain size of the microorganism carriers within the cylindrical containers 510a and 510b is set to 1 : 1.5 ~ 2.5, because when the ratio is greater than 1 : 1.5 ~ 2.5 there is a possibility that a microorganisms carrier having a smaller average grain size would enter a microorganism carrier having a larger average grain size.

Referring to Fig. 4, comparison results are shown for the decomposing ability and an air amount (an air gap amount) for each layer (each container) between (a) the secondary treating device 500 comprising a plurality of cylindrical mesh basket containers according to the present invention and (b) a secondary treating device 500 comprising a plurality of cylindrical mesh basket containers according to a prior art (b).

As can be seen from Fig. 4, in the prior art example (b), the secondary treating device 500 which comprises only dense microorganism carriers contains a small amount of air, and therefore activation of the microorganisms decreases near the center part of the secondary treating device 500, which leads to exhibit a low ability for treating microorganisms.

To the contrary, in the present invention (a) comprising alternate arrangement of dense and coarse microorganism carriers, although the dense microorganism carrier part contains a smaller amount of air, the coarse microorganism carrier part contains a larger amount of air, and therefore a

larger amount of air is contained even at the center part of the secondary treating device 500. As a result, activation of the microorganisms is accelerated to increase treating ability for the microorganisms.

5 All the containers are packed with wood chips  
(microorganism carriers) composed of shavings of Japanese cedar, so that the secondary treating device 500 subjects organic components within the introduced organic waste water  
to an oxidation decomposing treatment by means of aerobic  
10 microorganisms living in the carriers.

In the example described, the mesh size (a gap) of the cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a, 510b is 3 ~ 7 mm, preferably 5 mm, and the size of wood chip is 2 ~ 10 mm.

In another configuration, in the cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a and 510b, the bottom 5 cm are packed with wood chips of 5 ~ 10 mm size and next 10 cm are packed with 2 ~ 4 mm wood chips.

In still another configuration, a central cylindrical (diameter: 5 cm) area in the cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a and 510b is packed with wood chips of 2 ~ 4 mm size, and areas above and below are packed with 5 ~ 10 mm wood chips.

Other types of containers other than mesh basket containers may be used as the cylindrical containers 510a, 25 510b, as long as they include holes through which air can pass. Unglazed containers may be used, for example.

Weirs (cutout portions) are formed in the split-flow

device 800. The action of these weirs (cutout portions) allows the primary treated water to be evenly distributed into a plurality of secondary treating devices 500 located below. Specifically, in the example of Fig. 1, three cutout portions 5 are provided, and a liquid overflowing through respective cutouts is separately extracted so as to obtain evenly split flow.

The weir (a cutout portion) of the split-flow device 800 is formed by cutting out a triangular piece having each side 10 of 5 cm. It is preferable to appropriately vary the side length of the triangular piece in proportion to an amount of liquid to be supplied from the precipitation-separation tank 700. If the weirs are small even when a large amount of the liquid component is supplied, the liquid would overflow from 15 the split-flow device 800 or the weirs would be clogged with fine particles contained in the liquid supplied from the precipitation-separation tank 700.

Further, the portion of the split-flow device 800 before the weirs preferably has an inclined bottom so as to allow 20 cleaning when sludge is accumulated thereon, and a pump is provided for pumping the accumulated sludge. The waste water after cleaning is returned back to the flow rate controlling tank 300 or the precipitation-separation tank 700.

A discharge pipe 560 is connected to the bottom of the 25 containers 500 for discharging treated water.

In the secondary treating device 500 having the structure as described above, the primary treated water in the solid-

liquid separation device 400 is diffused on the center part of the surface of the cylindrical mesh basket containers 510a, flows downward in contact with the microorganisms which decompose the organic components in the primary treated water, 5 and is finally discharged through the discharge pipe 560 out of the garbage treating apparatus.

In particular, because the supplied liquid is split by the split-flow device 800, the primary treated liquid can be evenly supplied from above the secondary treating device 500.

10 As a result, treatment can be improved by employing the entire secondary treating device 500. In the example shown in Fig. 1, stacks comprising the mesh basket containers 510a, 510b are provided in three rows, and, therefore, the split-flow device 800 splits the supplied primary treated water into three 15 flows, which are then evenly supplied to the respective mesh basket containers 510a.

The solid substance treating device 600 comprises a treating tank 610 for storing the solid substances introduced after solid-liquid separation, a stirrer 620 for stirring the 20 solid substances, and a heater or the like (not shown).

The treating tank 610 contains carriers composed of wood chips or shavings or the like and activated carbon for cultivating microorganisms. The microorganisms decompose the solid substances into carbon dioxide and water so as to 25 produce compost.

The solid substances and the carriers are mixed by the stirrer 620 while air is introduced inside the treating tank

610 which is maintained at a predetermined temperature (30°C ~ 40°C in the present embodiment) by the heater, to thereby accelerate activation of the microorganisms or the like.

The operation of the garbage treating apparatus having 5 the above structure will next be described.

When waste is to be treated, the start switch 203 is turned ON to start the disposal 200. As a result, the electromagnetic valve 202 is operated so that garbage discharged from the sink 101 is ground in the disposal 200 and is then introduced into the storage tank 301 through the introduction pipe 201.

By configuring the introduction pipe 201 such that it is inclined by an appropriate amount, it is possible for the pulverized garbage to be transported into the storage tank 301 without employing a separate drive force or the like.

When waste treatment is not required (for example, when fresh water is discharged), the start switch 200 is left OFF. In this state, the electromagnetic valve 202 would not operate, so that waste water or the like flows directly into 20 the discharge pipe 204.

Most of the solid substances contained in the mixture introduced into the storage tank 301 precipitate and collect at the bottom of the storage tank 301. The air lift pump 304 is then driven so that substantially a fixed amount of solid 25 substances and liquid can be supplied to the solid-liquid separating apparatus 400, regardless of the water level of the storage tank 301 detected by the water level sensor 306. The

mixture containing a large amount of solid substances stored at the bottom of the storage tank 301 is transported through the pipe 303 to the solid-liquid separation device 400 by means of the solid substance transporting air lift pump 304.

5 At this point, the state of the transport portion 420A of the solid-liquid separating device 400 is as shown in Fig. 2. Specifically, the standby switch 442 is operated by the magnet 441 so that the transport plate 421 awaits introduction of the mixture at a standby position.

10 Accordingly, the mixture transported from the flow rate controlling tank 300 contacts the transport plate 421 and loses energy and speed, such that it accumulates on the first slit portion 410A.

15 The transport portion 420A and the second slit portion 430A swing back and forth by means a motor (not shown) between the states shown in Fig. 3(a) and Fig. 3(b) by the action of the standby position switch 442 and the swing limit position switch 443. This swinging movement causes the agglomeration of the mixture containing the separated solid substances to be  
20 stirred for draining, so that solid-liquid separation can be performed with high efficiency.

Because the optimum number of swing depends on the type of solid substance, the number of swinging movements for each introduction of the mixture can preferably be set to a rate  
25 optimized for the introduced substance. However, from the standpoint of solid-liquid separation efficiency, a range of 5 ~ 40 times is preferable.

After a predetermined number of swinging movements, the transport portion 420A rotates until the solid substance discharge position switch 444 operates, so that the solid substances separated from the liquid component is placed into 5 the solid substance treating device 600.

The treating tank 610 of the solid substance treating device 600 contains the carriers composed of wood chips or shavings and activated carbon for cultivating microorganisms.

10 The solid substances having been subjected to solid-liquid separation and introduced into the treating tank are decomposed for composting, and then bagged or the like for discharge.

15 The lower the water content in the solid substances separated from the liquid component in the solid-liquid separation device 400, the shorter the time required for composting the solid substances. If it is desired that treatment be completed within a fixed amount, a the capacity of the treating tank 610 can be designed sufficiently large for treating the solid substances having a high water content.

20 According to the present embodiment, however, the solid-liquid separation efficiency of the solid-liquid separating device 400 is improved as described above, so that the treating tank 610 can be downsized and the cost for the whole apparatus can be reduced.

25 As described above, according to the present invention, it is possible to provide a solid-liquid separating device capable of solid-liquid separation in a short time while

reducing the amount of solid substances passing through the drain slots 411, and a garbage treating system using the same.

As clearly described above, the present invention provides an advantage in that organic water such as a liquid output from a disposal or kitchen waste water can be effectively treated by means of preferable aerobic treatment using natural diffusion of oxygen and without supplying forced air circulation by an air pump as in the conventional garbage treating apparatus.

10 While the preferred embodiment of the present invention has been described using specific terms, such description is for illustrative purposes only, and it is to be understood that changes and variations may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A waste treatment apparatus comprising:

a disposal for mechanically reducing waste discharged

5 from a kitchen;

a flow rate controlling tank for temporarily storing a mixture of the waste reduced by said disposal and kitchen waste water;

10 a solid-liquid separating device for separating the mixture supplied from the flow rate controlling tank into a solid component and a liquid component;

15 a composting device for converting the solid component separated by the solid-liquid separating device into a compost;

20 a precipitation-separation tank for precipitating fine particles in the liquid component supplied from the solid-liquid separating device;

a split-flow device for distributing the liquid component supplied from the precipitation-separation tank; and

25 a waste water treating device for biologically treating the liquid component supplied from the split-flow device to thereby produce treated water.

2. A waste treatment apparatus according to claim 1,

25 wherein

said waste water treating device comprises a tank containing microorganism carriers, and

5           said liquid component is introduced into the tank,  
subjected to a biological treatment in the tank, and then  
discharged out of said waste treatment apparatus.

5           3. A waste treatment apparatus according to claim 2,  
wherein said waste water treating device has perforated  
containers containing said microorganism carriers.

6           4. A waste treatment apparatus according to claim 3,  
10         wherein said waste water treating device comprises a plurality  
of said perforated containers.

7           5. A waste treatment apparatus according to claim 3 or  
15         4, wherein said perforated containers are in contact with one  
another.

8           6. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of  
claims 3 to 5, wherein said microorganism carriers comprise  
grains of a plurality of average grain sizes which are  
20         alternately stacked in said containers.

9           7. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of  
claims 3 to 5, wherein said microorganism carriers comprise  
grains of a plurality of average grain sizes which are  
25         concentrically packed in said containers.

8. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of claims 6 to 7, wherein, in said waste water treating apparatus, the ratio of diameters of said microorganism carriers having different average grain size is 1 : 1.5 - 2.5.

5

9. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of claims 2 to 8, wherein said microorganism carriers are wood chips.

卷之三

10. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of claims 3 to 9, wherein said containers are mesh baskets.

11. A waste treatment apparatus according to claim 10,  
wherein the mesh size (air gap) of said mesh baskets is 3 mm -  
7 mm.

12. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of claims 3 to 8, wherein said containers are unglazed containers

30

13. A waste treatment apparatus according to any of claims 1 to 12, wherein said split-flow device includes a cleaning device, and waste water from the cleaning device is returned to the flow rate controlling tank or the precipitation-separation tank.

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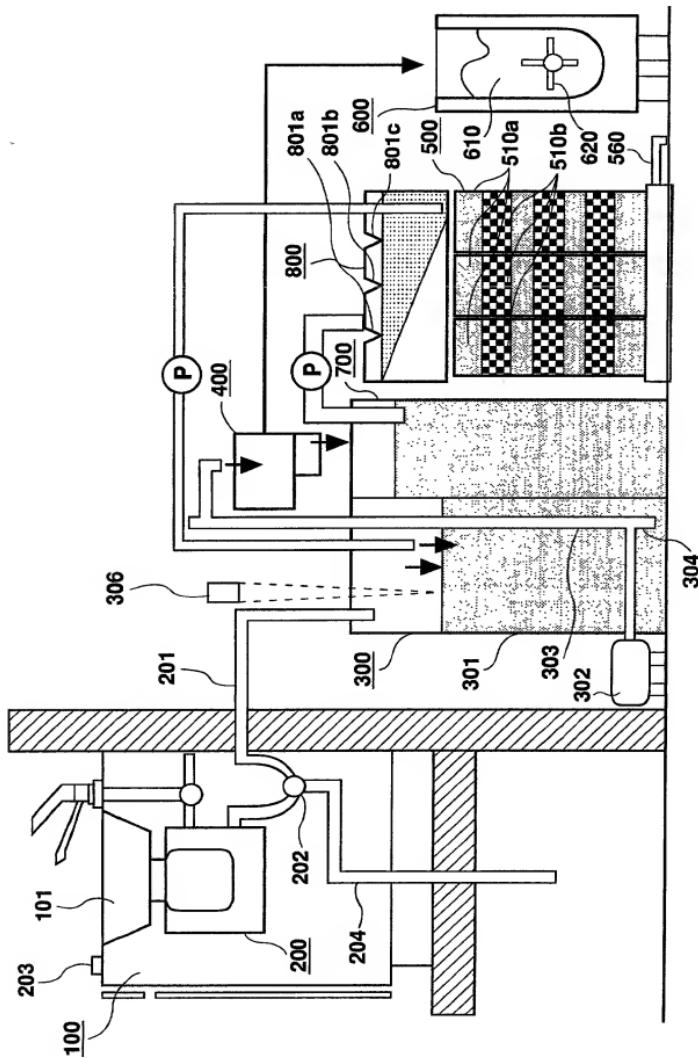
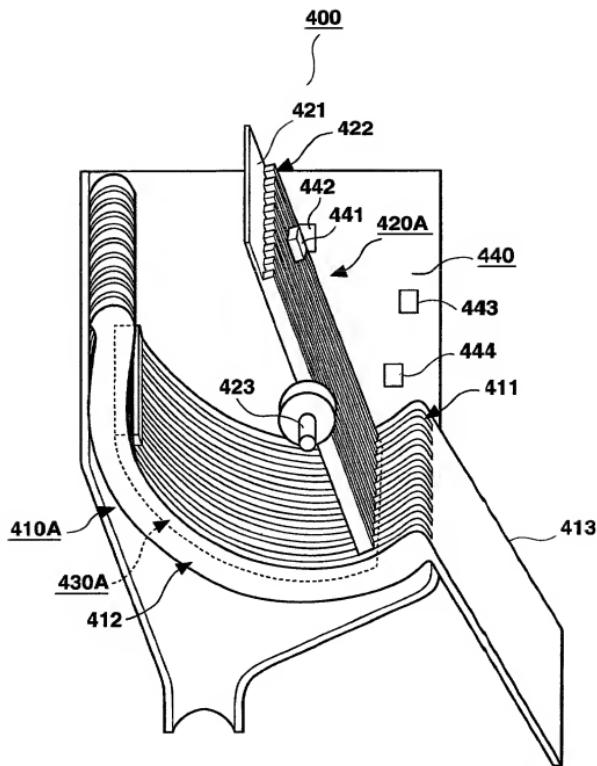


Fig. 1

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**Fig. 2**

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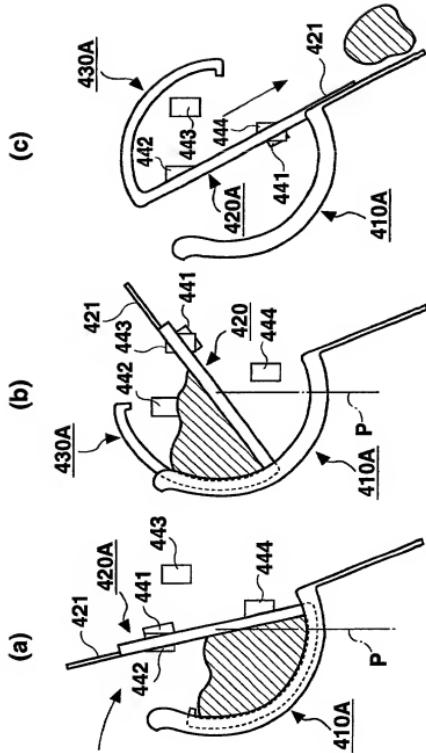


Fig. 3

10/019095

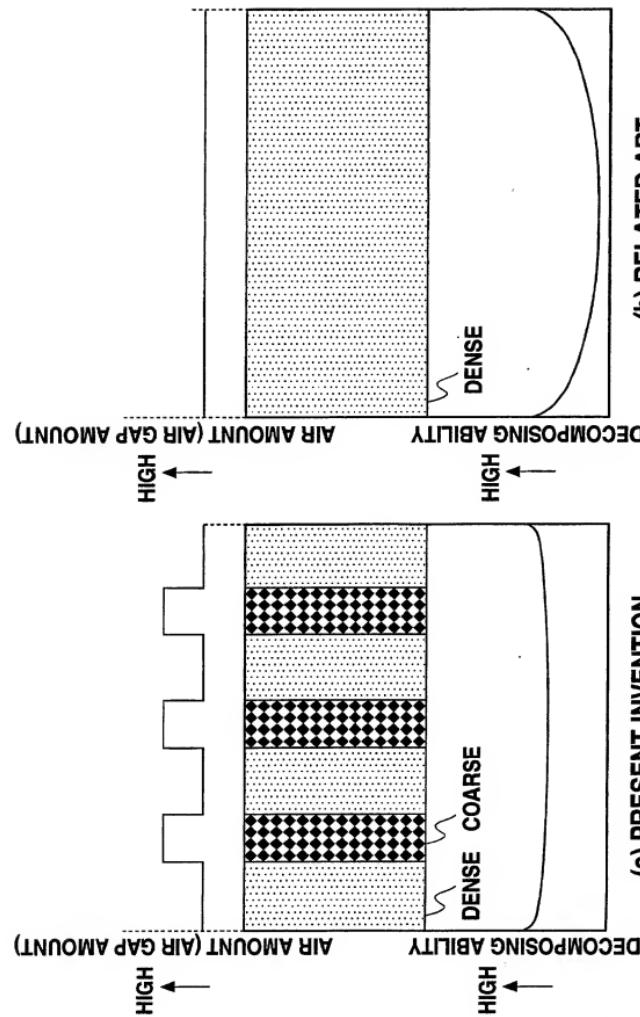


Fig. 4

## Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application

### 特許出願宣言書及び委任状

### Japanese Language Declaration

### 日本語宣言書

私は、以下に記名された発明者として、ここに下記の通り宣言する：

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

私の住所、郵便の宛先そして国籍は、私の氏名の後に記載された通りである。

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name.

下記の名称の発明について、特許請求範囲に記載され、且つ特許が求められている発明主題に関して、私は、最初、最先且つ唯一の発明者である（唯一の氏名が記載されている場合）か、或いは最初、最先且つ共同発明者である（複数の氏名が記載されている場合）と信じている。

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

#### APPARATUS FOR TREATING GARBAGE

上記発明の明細書はここに添付されているが、下記の欄がチェックされている場合は、この限りでない：

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

\_\_\_\_\_ の日に出願され、  
この出願の米国出願番号またはPCT国際出願番号は、  
\_\_\_\_\_ であり、且つ  
\_\_\_\_\_ の日に補正された出願（該当する場合）

was filed on \_\_\_\_\_  
as United States Application Number \_\_\_\_\_ or  
PCT International Application Number \_\_\_\_\_  
and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_  
(if applicable).

私は、上記の補正書によって補正された、特許請求範囲を含む上記明細書を検討し、且つ内容を理解していることをここに表明する。

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

私は、連邦規則法典第37編規則1.56に定義されている、特許性について重要な情報を示す義務があることを認める。

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

**Japanese Language Declaration**  
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私は、ここに、以下に記載した外国での特許出願または発明者証の出願、或いは米国以外の少なくとも一国を指定している米国法典第35編第3655条(e)によるPCT国際出願について、同第119条(e)-(d)項又は第3655条(b)項に基づいて優先権を主張することとともに、優先権を主張する本出願の出願日よりも前の出願日を有する外国での特許出願または発明者証の出願、或いはPCT国際出願については、いかなる出願も、下記の枠内をチェックすることにより示した。

I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application for which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Applications(s)

外国での先行出願

Hei 11-184137	Japan	29/June/1999	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number) (番号)	(Country) (国名)	(Day/Month/Year Filed) (出願日／月／年)	
Hei 11-277102	Japan	29/September/1999	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number) (番号)	(Country) (国名)	(Day/Month/Year Filed) (出願日／月／年)	
			<input type="checkbox"/>
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			<input type="checkbox"/>
(Number) (番号)	(Country) (国名)	(Day/Month/Year Filed) (出願日／月／年)	<input type="checkbox"/>

私は、ここに、下記のいかなる米国特許出願についても、その米国法典第35編第119条(e)項の利益を主張する。

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)	(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)
私は、ここに、下記のいかなる米国出願についても、その米国法典第35編第120条に基づく利益を主張し、又米国を指定するいかなるPCT国際出願についても、その同第3655条(d)に基づく利益を主張する。また、本出願の各特許請求の範囲の主題が、米国法典第35編第112条第1段に規定された趣旨で、先行する米国出願又はPCT国際出願に開示されていない場合においては、その先行出願の出願日と本国内出願日またはPCT国際出願日の間の期間中に入手された情報で、並非規則法典第37編第1.5-6に定義された特許性に關わる重要な情報について開示義務があることを承認する。			
PCT/JP00/04303	29/June/2000	PENDING	
(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)	(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned) (現況: 特許許可、係置中、放棄)	
(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)	(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned) (現況: 特許許可、係置中、放棄)	

私は、ここに表明された私自身の如實に係わる陳述が眞実であり、且つ情報を伝信することに基づく誤謬が、眞実であると信じられることを宣言し、さらに、故意に虚偽の陳述などを行った場合は、米国法典第18編第1001条に基づき、罰金または拘禁、若しくはその両方により处罚され、またそのような覚悟による虚偽の陳述は、本出願またはそれに対する発行されるいかなる特許も、その有効性に問題が生ずることを理解した上で陳述が行われたことを、ここに宣言する。

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

## Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

委任状：私は本出願を審査する手続を行い、且つ米国特許商標局との全ての異議を逓信するために、記名された発明者として、下記の弁護士及び／または弁理士を任命する。（氏名及び登録番号を記載すること）

**POWER OF ATTORNEY:** As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (list name and registration number).

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国籍	Citizenship		
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住所	Residence		
国籍	Citizenship		
郵便の宛先	Post Office Address		